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Survey Finds Dangerous Toys on Store Shelves Shopping Tips Can Help Parents Shop Safe

Washington, DC: Dec. 1 – Dangerous or toxic toys can still be found on America’s store shelves, according to U.S. Public Interest Research Group’s 29th annual [Trouble in Toyland](#) report or at [ToySafetyTips.org](#). The survey of hazardous toys found that, despite recent progress, consumers must still be wary when shopping this holiday season.

The report reveals the results of laboratory testing on toys for toxic chemicals, including lead, chromium and phthalates, all of which can have serious, adverse health impacts on a child’s development. The survey also found examples of small toys that pose a choking hazard, extremely loud toys that threaten children’s hearing, and powerful toy magnets that can cause serious injury if swallowed.

“We should be able to trust that the toys we buy are safe. However, until that’s the case, parents need to watch out for common hazards when shopping for toys,” said Sujatha Jahagirdar, U.S. PIRG Public Health Campaign Director.

For 29 years, the U.S. PIRG *Trouble in Toyland* report has offered safety guidelines for purchasing toys for small children, and provided examples of toys currently on store shelves that pose potential safety hazards.

Key findings from the report include:

- Toys with high levels of toxic substances are still on store shelves. We found toys containing phthalates well over legal limits, as well as toys with lead or chromium content above limits. For example, we found a toy tambourine with the heavy metal chromium at over 9x the legal limit of 60 ppm and several toys that violated phthalate limits.
- Despite a ban on small parts in toys for children under the age of three, we found toys available in stores that still pose choking hazards. For example, we found, both in a store and online, a set of foam blocks marked “2 and up” that included several blocks that were small parts.
- We also found toys that are potentially harmful to children’s ears and hearing. Although no toys violated current federal noise limits, we agree with hearing experts that those rules need to be strengthened.
- We continued to find small, powerful magnets that pose a dangerous threat to children if swallowed. For example, we continued to find two brands of small powerful magnet sets that have been recalled and are therefore illegal to be sold available online.

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"The 2008 Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act strengthened CPSC and gave the CPSC new authority to protect children from unsafe products. Mandatory toy standards, lower lead and phthalate limits, independent third party testing, and increased port inspections stop more dangerous toys than ever before from reaching toy shelves," stated Rachel Weintraub, legislative director and general counsel at Consumer Federation of America (CFA). "Parents and all consumers should have more confidence in the products they may own or consider purchasing but should also continue to carefully research and select the safest and most appropriate gifts for the children on their gift lists. Manufacturers should ensure they comply with the law and continued CPSC enforcement and adequate funding is necessary to further protect our nation's children."

U.S. PIRG's Jahagirdar added that "The CPSC's September ban on small, powerful toy magnet sets is also an important step forward. However, not all toys comply with the law, and holes in the toy safety net remain."

U.S. PIRG and CFA urge parents or caregivers who identify an unsafe toy or children's product to report the potential safety problem to the CPSC at www.saferproducts.gov. This will also provide key information to other consumers who may own or may be considering purchasing that toy.

"Parents should avoid shopping at stores that have not adopted a publicly available corporate policy on toxics in their products, such as Walgreens," concluded Jahagirdar. "Without such a policy, Walgreens does not play an active role in ensuring the safety of the products it sells. Instead, Walgreens leaves it up to manufacturers and suppliers to ensure the safety of products."

"Finally, Monday was Cyber Monday. We also urge parents to watch for hazards when shopping for toys on the web," concluded Jahagirdar. "Our report includes unsafe toys found in dollar stores, big box stores and online."

You can download our full [Trouble in Toyland](#) report. Parents can find our list of unsafe toys, as well as tips for safe toy shopping this holiday season, at ToySafetyTips.org.

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